

Drexel Hill, PA— If you follow Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) around on a typical Sunday morning, you will likely to find him visiting a church, synagogue, mosque, or other local community of faith. Sestak makes these weekly stops to talk not only about the values and service exemplified in the lives of congregants, but also to gather their opinions and counsel on issues of utmost importance, particularly violence in our community.

— In a speech to the Drexel Hill Baptist Church on Sunday morning, Congressman Sestak recognized Rev. Jeri E. Williams' congregation for their spirit of caring and compassion, and asked them to partner with him in addressing the subject of violence, ranging from gun crime and school violence to issues centered on religious and ethnic tolerance.

Government and religious communities have long sought solutions to alleviate social ills, including violence, and the Congressman noted the similar approaches each group takes to address such issues. Both rely on principles of faith, hope, and charity to accomplish their goals.

Members of religious institutions like the Drexel Hill Baptist Church rely on their faith in God. Lawmakers, too, rely on faith; a faith in the belief of our democracy and the ideals and values of our country. In addition, hope for peace and goodwill is a guiding tenet in both the government and religious communities. Most importantly religious congregants from all backgrounds are deeply rooted in values of charity. Though not charity, the Congressman sees these same values of helping those most in need in the programs of the federal government.

"It is the responsibility of those in government service to ensure the health and welfare of our residents," Congressman Sestak said. "However, it is the caring, committed and compassionate men and women in our local communities that often truly make a difference in the lives of those in need."

Similarly, violence is an issue that requires the full-force and support of all members of a community to address. Religious, non-profit and governmental organizations must rally together to foster solutions that tackle this homegrown problem that has been growing worse for years.

"Few issues are more important to local communities than addressing violence. Our houses of worship, as pillars of the community, along with government are looked to by the community to help combat that violence and its root causes," said the Congressman. "That is why, in the coming months, I will be hosting a summit that brings together the leaders of all faiths as well as law enforcement and other civic leaders for a summit on community violence."

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from

Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.